

## DECISIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

### DECISIONS REQUIRED

- 1 **Budget:** Pending approval by the Administration, \$250 thousand dollars has been requested in the 97 Decade Plan for the purpose of designing and building a skatepark.

Smaller jurisdictions seem to have taken the lead in building skateparks. With the exception of Phoenix, the largest community in this survey is Huntington Beach with a population of 190 thousand. Most skateparks were constructed for under \$100 thousand. A notable exception is Temecula, California (population 40 thousand,) which spent \$280 thousand. Most locations also report that their facilities are undersized for the demand. Phoenix, with a population of 1.2 million, has budgeted approximately \$280 thousand for construction of their facility.

2. **Location:** It is difficult to identify a location for the skatepark without knowing what type of facility is desirable. For a fuller discussion of the criteria for location, styles and equipment, please refer to “**Considerations**” outlined below. In general, however, decisions will be required as follows:
  - Should the City wait to build the facility in the Balloon Fiesta Park, or is this a long term option, perhaps for a fully programmed facility?
  - Should facilities be built in each quadrant of the City?
  - Should one large facility be built that maximizes the money available?
3. **Planning Process:** Virtually all jurisdictions agree that skaters should be involved in all aspects of planning and design of the park. Examples of involvement include: Temecula, California had a design committee that included skaters and skate suppliers; Eugene, Oregon conducted a design competition among middle and high school students; Arvada, Colorado formed a City advisory committee composed of skaters and sporting goods store owners.

Albuquerque could emulate Arvada and combine a civics lesson with an advisory function. Skaters (both rollerbladers and skateboarders) and Bikers from local middle and high schools could be formed into a Mayoral Advisory Committee with elected officers and support staff from the City. (Perhaps, the committee members could get school credit for their participation.) Duties of the Advisory Board could include:

- Type of skatepark: Street Course or Verts or both?
  - Should the facility be supervised or unsupervised, and what level of skill should be served? Is Balloon Fiesta Park a desirable location?
- Design expertise from the point of view of the user.
- Number and Location of skatepark(s) based on the available budget.

### CONSIDERATIONS

#### 1. CRITERIA FOR LOCATION

Most jurisdictions agree that a skatepark is not compatible with residential areas, areas of high to moderate foot traffic, or areas where noise and/or trash from the skaters will pose a particular problem.

- Skateboards, in particular, and skating/biking in general are noisy activities. The vibrating action of skate wheels on steel surfaces built on a wood frame are noisy. Placing these facilities in close proximity to a residential area is sure to generate complaints from neighbors. In Arvada, Colorado, for example, the facility is directly adjacent on two sides to residential development. Arvada staff report a substantial number of complaints from neighbors.
- Some skaters will skate to the facility. If there is steady foot traffic in the area, pedestrians will feel threatened. People seem generally to feel threatened by skaters, though CoA staff have found their demeanor polite and well informed about every aspect and nuance of their sport.
- The skatepark in Golden, Colorado is located directly adjacent to a large softball complex, which includes a concession stand and restroom facilities. Golden staff report that ball players are sometimes upset by skaters, and they recommend that a skatepark be isolated or clearly cut off from other athletic activities.

Based on ad hoc discussions with skaters, in Albuquerque and elsewhere, and with staff in other communities, it seems important to locate the facility on a public transportation route. Informal conversations with, and observations of, downtown skaters, suggests that they will ride the bus to reach a desirable skate location. Similarly, ad hoc discussion with downtown retail businesses suggest that they would be grateful to relocate skaters to a recreational facility.

Most skaters and staff agree that a nearby concession stand and restrooms are desirable, but not essential.

## CONSIDERATIONS

### 2. POSSIBLE SITES

A full list of possible locations for a skatepark may be found in Appendix IV. Examples of desirable locations include:

- **The Albuquerque Tennis Complex Area.** (Stadium, between Yale and University.)  
The Tennis Complex includes sixteen tennis courts and two racquetball courts. There are 7.43 acres of undeveloped land between Duke Stadium and the Tennis Complex. It is accessible to the bus routes on Yale, University and Central. It is isolated from residential areas and is generally not a high volume pedestrian area. A sturdy fence or wall would isolate the skaters from the tennis and/or ball players. In addition, the slopes on the site could be incorporated into the design of the park. There is enough space to provide a picnic/observation area and parking. (The Tennis Complex does not currently have sufficient parking; the introduction of a skatepark would exacerbate their problem.)
- **Coronado Park (2nd Street and I-40)**  
Though this park is completely developed, it does not receive a lot of use. It has the advantages of being surrounded by commercial uses that do not generate a lot of pedestrian traffic; it is in a fairly central location; it is accessible to public transportation; and there are no other competing uses. There is enough space to provide a picnic/observation area. Parking would require further investigation.
- **Los Altos Park - West of the Swimming Pool (Approx. 2-3 Acres)**  
There are several acres at the west end of Los Altos Park that are under or inefficiently utilized, or vacant. The area is bounded by Lomas on the North, I-40 on the South, the I-40 off-ramp on the West and the Garden Center/Swimming Pool on the East. Within the boundaries, the land is either vacant or used for: an old and very underutilized playground, and parking/staging areas for Public Works and Park Management. The arrangement of the parking areas appears to have been unplanned, and consequently, the space is used inefficiently. Re-arrangement of the space and, perhaps, elimination of the playground, combined with the vacant area would yield 2 to 3 acres for a skatepark. This location is attractive because: it is isolated from residential areas and from the nearby sports facilities; it is centrally located; and it is accessible to public transportation.

There are other potential locations, including notably the Balloon Fiesta Park Complex. The above are cited because they so closely fit the desirable criteria and they may be available currently.

### 3. NUMBER OF SKATEPARKS

Closely related to the issue of potential sites for a skatepark is the question of how many facilities should be built.

- **A Single Skatepark**

A single, large facility, located on a bus route has the advantage of maximizing the return on the City's financial investment, but the disadvantage of being somewhat less accessible.

A one acre park, for example, could accommodate more than one street course arranged in such a manner that several skaters could use various elements or aspects of the course(s) simultaneously. It would be large enough to accommodate more than one of each type of skate feature: including quarter-pipes, verts, pyramids, steps, railings and grind boxes. Finally, it could accommodate a large number of skaters at one time without excessive waits, a problem reported by most jurisdictions and observed in the Colorado and Santa Fe skateparks.

Based on all the discussions with staff in other jurisdictions, a single facility is the recommended option.

- **Multiple Skateparks**

Providing verts (half-pipes) in every quadrant would probably be relatively inexpensive; providing a street course in every quadrant would probably be cost prohibitive. The four skateparks visited in Colorado include a combination of street course features and either half or quarter-pipes. California skateparks typically do not include verts, but some do include concave sides on the bowl that may function in a manner similar to a quarter-pipe.

Street Course equipment is used in combination; speed and run-up room is needed. For a jurisdiction with a population as large as Albuquerque's, combinations of features would have to be duplicated to allow more than one skater on the course at a time. These combinations include banked walls, quarter-pipes, pyramids/camel toes, stairs and railings, each with enough run-up room to allow for enough speed. In short, each facility would have to be quite large to meet the basic criteria for success.

It is unclear if verts are an absolute requirement for success. Santa Fe is planning a second park for two reasons: first and foremost the demand has far outstripped the skatepark they built, and second the skaters are clamoring for verts.

A decision will have to be made about the number and location of the skatepark(s,) and the skate features/equipment to include, but again, **there is every reason to believe that wherever skating facilities are built, they will be flooded with users.**